

How to Apply to US-UK-Canada-Netherlands – in 7 Steps

Overview

Meeting 1 – Jan-Feb – “Who I Am Academically & Why Florimont Should Support My Application”

Meeting 2 – March-April – “What I Have Learned About Personal Statements & The Top 3 Academic Reasons I am Suitable for My Dream Course”

Meeting 3 – May – Transcript Check. Most Selective Universities Personal Statement v1.

Meeting 4 & 5 – September-October, Terminale – Improving PS – ALL.

NB.

- I will assume you are serious about applying to UK-US if you turn up to the October “launch” meeting.
- If you decide NOT to apply, you must **email** me immediately *with your parents in copy*.
- Your name will appear next to a particular date on the appointments sheet outside my office.
- **You MUST sign up for an appointment with me on that day.** If you cannot make that day I need an **email** from you with your parents in copy explaining why.
- If I receive no such email I will assume you are no longer applying, your name will not appear on future meetings and the school will take no further steps to help you apply.

The Seven Steps

Please note if sessions are missed or meetings not prepared for thoroughly, with all necessary components in place, you will need to do the following, if you wish to continue the application process:

- **Prepare** what was missing by yourself, perhaps with the help of other students.
- **Email** me with a list of what was missing and screenshots of your GD folder showing that everything is now in place, with your **parents** and **titulaire** in copy.

7 Steps	For
1. Attend “Big Group” lunchtime sessions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Bring your computer, with a working connection. Take notes in a Google Doc called “1 - <i>Essential Uni Application Skills</i>”. These meetings will be announced on Pronote and via your <i>titulaires</i> (if they remember). <u>YOU must remember to attend. A register will be taken and if you are absent you will need a note from Vie Scolaire to continue applying.</u> 	
e. November - How to Research	November
f. December – How to Create Google Drive Folder & Access Application Resources ¹	December
g. January – Personal Statement & Academic Journals – all you need to know.	January
h. March – How to Work with Your 2 Key Teachers	March
i. May – UCAS & Common App Accounts ²	May
2. Watch DL’s videos on transcripts and targeting universities: take thorough notes in a 2nd Google Doc called “2 - <i>Transcripts & Targetting</i> ”. (1 side of notes)	Meeting 1

¹ DL videos, « 1^{ère} Pack » & UCAS tools – all linked in the Blog d’Orientation.

² Once UCAS and Common App have opened in May, create an account and complete all details: **select IB or French Bac or Matu (in qualifications)** and then **add modules for each subject**.

<p>3. Spend November and December (1ère)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Researching university courses in detail and self-analysing – you MUST know what course you want to apply for. 500 word Google Doc in Google Drive folder.³ – see Sample Comments p14 to see the kind of thing to write. b. Preparing your transcript (US-Cambridge – Canada – IE-ESADE – Netherlands) c. Watching DL’s videos and taking notes. d. Gathering your 3ème, 2nde and 1ère bulletins in order and putting in DL’s casier.⁴ e. Identifying the 2 key texts you will read, related to your dream course, during Jan & Feb f. **Preparing for Meeting 1 (see below)** 	<p>Last week December</p>
<p>4. Meeting 1 – Jan-Feb – Present for 10’ to Lally, with 2 other students interested in the same academic branch (e.g. Econ-Business Mgt OR PPE-International Relations OR Philosophy-Theology OR Social Sciences), addressing the following –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Who I am academically <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. My favourite subjects and why they appeal. ii. Where I get my best marks & the 2 best bits of work I have done this year in those subjects. iii. My average so far this year across all subjects. iv. My position in the class – top 5? Middle? Lower end? v. How my school reports support my own prediction of my final results (e.g. I 	<p>Jan-Feb</p>

³ To be written in the following way - *“I have looked at 10 universities offering Business, all in the south or London area (this is v important to me because...). The one that stood out more than any other was Royal Holloway, because firstly....secondly...and finally...The course really appeals to me because....My second choice would be....The module about econometrics offered in the 2nd year looks particularly interesting to me: we have already looked at statistics in my Econ option, and....I am likely to achieve a 4.75 in the matu and the course page states that a 4.5 is usually enough – or 30 IB points...This would be my dream choice, but another one would be...ALSO SEE SAMPLE COMMENTS ON P14*

⁴ **No bulletins in my casier by end December ? I will assume you’re not applying.** Gather your **reports** from 3ème (US Grade 9), 2nde (US Grade 10) and 1ère (US Grade 11). Where are your strongest marks? What is your position in the class, roughly? **Highlight your strongest subjects and best comments.**

<p>have maintained an average of 16/17 over the last 2 years – I will probably get a 17 or 18...)</p> <p>vi. The 2 teachers and subjects most relevant to the subject I wish to specialize in at uni.</p> <p>vii. The 2 most interesting things I found out while researching courses.</p> <p>b. Why Florimont Should Support My Application</p> <p>i. 3 strongest reasons I am attracted by studies in the UK OR US OR Netherlands OR Canada⁵⁶</p> <p>ii. The 2 texts recommended on the Oxford or Cambridge or LSE or UCL subject web page which I have ordered already and about which I will complete my “Academic Journal” during Jan-Feb-March.</p> <p>c. **Prepare for Meeting 2 during Jan-Feb**</p>	
<p>5. Meeting 2 – March-April – Present for 10’ to Lally, with 2 other students interested in the same academic branch & Ensure Your 1st Draft of PS or Common App Essay is Ready</p> <p>a. The 3 most important characteristics of a personal statement for the UK (or essay for the US)– with examples...5 minutes.</p> <p>i. From the Florimont personal statements I have learned that....For example...</p> <p>ii. From the Essex Uni Guide I have learned that....as well as....</p> <p>b. The Top 3 Academic Reasons I am Suitable for My Dream Course 5 minutes</p> <p>c. By this time you must have used one of the PS “generating tools” (see blog – either UCAS or Which?) to generate a 1st draft of a PS. An editable version (ie Google Doc) MUST be in your GD folder for this meeting.</p>	March-April
<p>6. Work with Your 2 Key Teachers – March-April-May</p> <p>a. Talk to your 2 key teachers and complete the subject-specific Google forms together:</p>	

⁵ NOT ALLOWED – « I wish to improve my English.... » « I am very internationally minded » « I want to make the world a better place » « I am applying to the most prestigious universities throughout the world » et al. « I am worried I won’t get into Geneva so I need a back-up »

⁶ NOT – « I love London » or « I want a prestigious uni » or « Applying to the UK is fashionable »

b. Your teachers will ask you questions: together, think of 2 specific projects or pieces of work which most demonstrate your suitability for the course you want. (E.g an experiment in Physics might show your problem-solving and communication skills – find the relevant detail together)	
7. Meeting 3 – May – Transcript Check ⁷ - come with 2 other students who also need a transcript.	May

Things to Remember

1. If you email me asking me something that you should know from the resources, a PS or a Google Doc, I will not reply.
2. If you plan to apply to **Oxford, Cambridge or LSE I need to know by March of 1ère at the latest**. DO NOT put LSE into your choices after this point...
3. **If you are Bac S** and you want to apply to International Relations or PPE (a) why didn't you do ES?, and (b) you **MUST** attend a summer program to make up your gaps in at least 2 of the subjects. **Please** do not announce to me in Terminale that you will "add Cambridge" to your uni choices...this never works.
4. **Sign up for meetings with me in pairs**, with other students planning to apply for the same subject. Email me if you find no-one.
5. For **Art and Design**, a portfolio is vital. Work on this during 1ère and have it done by October of Terminale at the latest.
6. If you have a question about UCAS or Common App, you must check the **help section** in the blog before asking.

⁷ You arrive with your Mac open, with a working wifi connection or hotspot, with your transcript open in Google Drive.

HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT FOR THE UK – Some Helpful Questions to Help You Start Thinking About Who You Are

1. Ask yourself and your parents: “ if you knew back when I was 5 years old that 12 years later I would be applying for (say) Economics, why would that make sense?” Or – “ What little stories would you tell about me or I can I tell about myself from the past that show that one day it would be my destiny to study (insert subject name here)?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Spend some time having that conversation and write down everything they say.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Imagine how you would complete the following sentence starters- DISCUSS WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS AND TEACHERS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. “ <i>I would like to study X because not only do I love....but also because....</i> ” – 2 OR 3 REASONS.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. “ <i>Three experiences in my life led me to the point I am at today where I have made the choice to study X: firstly, at the age of (number) I.....secondly, in (year), I was able to attend such and such an event which involved....(a, b and c) and from this I learned that.....Thirdly, studying x and y at school has added to my interest because....</i> ”	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. “ <i>By doing my Extended Essay, which took x hours and involved a, b and c, I developed skills of...and realized for the first time x & y.</i> ” (Or TPE or Travail de Maturité).	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Now write your first version – ensure you include	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. at least 5 subject-specific, technical words	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. 5 specific words used in the course description (e.g. qualitative v quantitative research; problem-solving skills et al)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Most Popular Universities at Florimont – Not that You Have to Be the Same!

- **Economics** (& Finance or Accountancy) – LSE, Warwick, Kings, City, UCL (top grades only), Exeter (slightly lower).
- **Politics, Economics, Politics & International Relations** (maybe with History): Warwick, Bath, Bristol, Kings, Surrey (backup for top students, reach choice for others), Sussex, Durham, Manchester (typically a back-up), Exeter.
- **Sports Management**: Bournemouth, Chester, Loughborough, Kent, Derby.
- **Medicine**: Leicester, St George's, Kings, Queen Mary.
- **Law**: Coventry, Chester, Brighton, Bournemouth (all 24-30 IB points), Oxford Brookes, Kent, Royal Holloway.
- **Engineering**: Bath, Manchester, UCL, Imperial, Cambridge, Southampton, Birmingham, Bristol, Aston.
- **Business Management**: Warwick, Queen Mary, Royal Holloway, Kings, Brunel, Goldsmiths, Kent, Sussex, Southampton, Durham, Bristol.
- **If you HAVE to be in London** and don't care too much where: Westminster, London Metropolitan, Greenwich
- **(Robotics &) Computing**: Plymouth, Warwick, Leeds, Bristol (West of England), Kings, Warwick, UCL, Exeter, Imperial.
- **Liberal Arts**: Exeter, Royal Holloway, Kent, Surrey, UCL.
- **Physics**: Exeter, Cardiff, Sussex, Portsmouth, Southampton.

To Help You Choose Universities Realistically...

Easier (IB 28, FB 10-12)

- ** Manchester Metropolitan
- ** Brighton
- ** Royal Holloway
- ** Bath Spa
- ** Cardiff Metropolitan
- * Canterbury Christ Church
- * Sheffield Hallam
- * UCLAN
- Greenwich London
- London Metropolitan
- Westminster

Mid Level (IB 30-36, FB 13-16)

- *** Nottingham
- *** SOAS, London
- *** Surrey
- *** York
- *** Exeter
- ** Loughborough

- ** City, London
- ** Queen Mary, London
- ** Newcastle
- ** Liverpool
- ** Manchester
- ** Glasgow
- ** Kent
- ** Sussex
- ** Sheffield
- ** Cardiff
- * Essex
- * Leicester
- * Brunel
- * Goldsmith's
- * Aberdeen
- * Dundee
- * Leeds
- Portsmouth
- Reading
- ** Keele

Most Difficult (IB 36 upwards, FB 16 up)

- *** UCL

- *** L.S.E.
- *** Oxford
- *** Imperial, London
- *** Warwick
- ** New College of Humanities - can be additional choice
- ** Edinburgh
- ** St Andrews
- ** Courtauld
- ** Bath
- * Kings College London

- * Bristol

Creative (Portfolio more than academics)

- University of Arts London (lots of colleges)
- Arts University, Bournemouth

UCAS DETAILS CHECKLIST – FOR JUNE 1ère (EARLY ENTRY) OR SEPTEMBER TLE (REGULAR)

Before you ask me to send your application, you must double-check the following. Don't expect me to respond to requests for help until you have completed these details correctly.

FEATURE TO CHECK	EXAMPLE	CHECKED!
Capitals for 1st main words in address and commas between the different elements of the address?	E.g 34 Avenue de Champel, Geneva, 1206 Switzerland	<input type="checkbox"/>
French words changed to English?	E.g. "Geneva", not "Genève"	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date of 1st entry to UK	20 th August of entry year.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fee Code	02 if you have been living in CH or EU last 3 years.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nominated access	Duncan Lally, University Counsellor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subjects (in "Education") with capitals for first letter?	e.g. "History-Geography" not "history-geography"	<input type="checkbox"/>
All university choices entered?	You need to know which unis and courses you are applying for!	<input type="checkbox"/>

All subjects being done in French Bac, Swiss Matu or IB entered, with correct date and result (for epreuves anticipés)?	I cannot enter predictions unless you do this!	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Personal Statement Checklist

Ensure that your personal statement meets all of the following criteria before you seek feedback. If you fall into these traps, our time will be less productive – and you will have wasted a valuable opportunity for feedback.

Criteria	Descriptor	VERSION 1	VERSION 2	VERSION 3
1.	The statement is 4000 characters (with spaces) and 47 lines or less.			
2.	You have included the phrases “From this, I learned...” or “I realized that not only...but also...” AT LEAST 3 TIMES.			
3.	You have included at least 5 subject-specific or otherwise very technical terms – e.g. from Economics, from Management theory, from linguistics, from Maths.			
4.	You have copied and pasted the subject description and left the key headings at the top of the Google Doc PS BETWEEN EACH VERSION.			
5.	You have left the Counsellor’s comments on the document and NOT marked them as resolved.			
6.	The opening paragraph does not contain an unoriginal quote. (e.g. Churchill, Shakespeare etc.)			

7.	The opening paragraph is original and clearly demonstrates why you wish to study that particular subject.			
8.	The opening paragraph does not contain references to family members.			
9.	The statement does not make excessive use of the word 'I'			
10.	The statement does not tell the reader what they can read in another part of the application (e.g. what subjects you are studying)			
11.	The statement does contain hyperbole (e.g. I am so passionate about literature)			
12.	FOR EACH OF THE 3 KEY EXPERIENCES you follow up with "By doing this, I learned that....and developed skills of..."			
13.	The statement is at least 90% about the subject for which you are applying - HIGHLIGHT THE 2 SECTIONS ELECTRONICALLY TO SHOW THIS.			
14.	The statement has a theme that links the paragraphs together. Be clear in your head what this theme is.			
15.	The statement makes a link between the academic area of interest and the extra-curricular activities. (content and/or skills)			
16.	The statement demonstrates that you have pursued your academic area of interest beyond the classroom. E.g. "When I attended the linguistics seminar, I was surprised to find that..."			
17.	The statement does not simply 'name drop' books, journals or societies - "By reading this, I learned that...I realized that..."			
18.	The statement contains evidence of critical thought. (State your opinion on an issue, challenge the views of others in your field etc.)			
19.	The paragraphs that comprise the statement are linked and the			

	ideas flow smoothly from one to the next.			
20.	The statement does not attempt to tackle an excessive number of issues. (This will make it impossible to be critical)			
21.	The statement is your own work.			
22.	The statement 'shows' the reader that you are academically able and interested in your subject without having to resort to 'telling' them (The latter is extremely tedious and dull for the reader).			

[Sample of UCAS PS Generator PDF](#)

Here's a summary of the answers you gave – it should give you inspiration for your first draft.

UCAS

Personal statement

by Duncan

I love reading, and I love analysing what I read through discussion and writing.

I have a strong imagination, am awestruck at what texts can do as well as the kinds of discussion they can generate about what it means to be human.

My best marks have often been in English; I communicate well; my vocabulary is wide; I am quicker than others to sense what the author may be intending; I am also fascinated by literary theory.

HL English has given me the opportunity to develop skills of interpretation, close reading as well as a broader grasp of literary concepts and the canon.

My love from drama - especially Shakespeare - got me involved in acting from the age of 11.

Sample Comments for Your Research

- *When I read the description for History at Bristol, I know that I want to study History - firstly because....(something you already do in History that you love); secondly, because (what the course offers that other courses may not).⁸*
- *Having thoroughly researched History and Languages, History, History and Politics as well as IR, I know that H & L is what I want to do, at Exeter, because firstly....(something that's already true)...and secondly, because Exeter gives you the chance to....as well as to...(something that's unique to Exeter)...*
- *I do enjoy studying several subjects BUT it's literature that inspires me the most: Maths is, Science is ok but....When I am in English lessons, however, I find that.....⁹*

OR

I may apply to the UK because my parents want me nearer home and also because it's cheaper, BUT I want to apply to the US because....(genuine justification for liberal arts).¹⁰

PROBLEM - applying everywhere - BAD IDEA!

E.g. - US, UK, Switzerland. Bad idea - EITHER US OR UK! Otherwise, stress.

⁸ Notice – ALWAYS 2 REASONS, never just 1. Research-based.

⁹ This is what « self-knowledge » looks like !

¹⁰ You MUST have a better reason than « it's an Ivy-league uni » !

Checklist

Probable University Choices, Required Grades & My Predictions

Dream Course and Uni: _____

In order of preference	Name of Uni.	Required Overall Result in FB, SM or IB	My Likely Overall Result
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

2 key subjects (& teachers)

1 _____

2 _____

Month	Meeting	Focus	Done
November-December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “How to Research” • “How to Create GD Folder & Access Application Resources” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend research meeting • Create Google Doc “1 - Application Skills” • Bring physical folder to each meeting & take notes • 2 hours researching university courses in detail & self-analyzing. • 30 minutes writing 500 words of research findings. • 20 minutes quality-checking, using sample comments to ensure quality. • Gather and annotate 3ème-2nde-1ère bulletins – to DL’s casier • Identify & order 2 x key texts related to your course choice you will read • Create your 10’ presentation (Powerpoint or other – saved on your computer) for Meeting 1 (see all elements required in 7 step guide) • Check the quality of your presentation; ensuring EACH required element is there. Present to your parents. • Watch videos on transcripts & targeting universities – notes in 2nd Google Doc – “2 - Transcripts & Targeting” 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
January	“Personal Statement & Academic Journals”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meeting & take notes 	<input type="checkbox"/>

March-April-May	Work with your 2 Key Teachers		
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCAS & Common Application • Transcript Check – Cambridge, Netherlands, US 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend meeting & register on the websites • Sign up for meeting with DL in pairs to check transcripts 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
September-October	3	UCAS details completed .	<input type="checkbox"/>
		UCAS details checked using the “details” checklist (capitals, spellings etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Early Entry only</i> – Sept workshop 1 – version 2 .	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<i>Early Entry only</i> – Sept workshop 2 – version 3 .	<input type="checkbox"/>
October-November	4	Regular Entry – PS or Essay v2, pre-checked and with checking sheet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Regular Entry – final PS version (3 rd)	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Final check of details.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5	Send.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Extra help with some aspect of application.	<input type="checkbox"/>